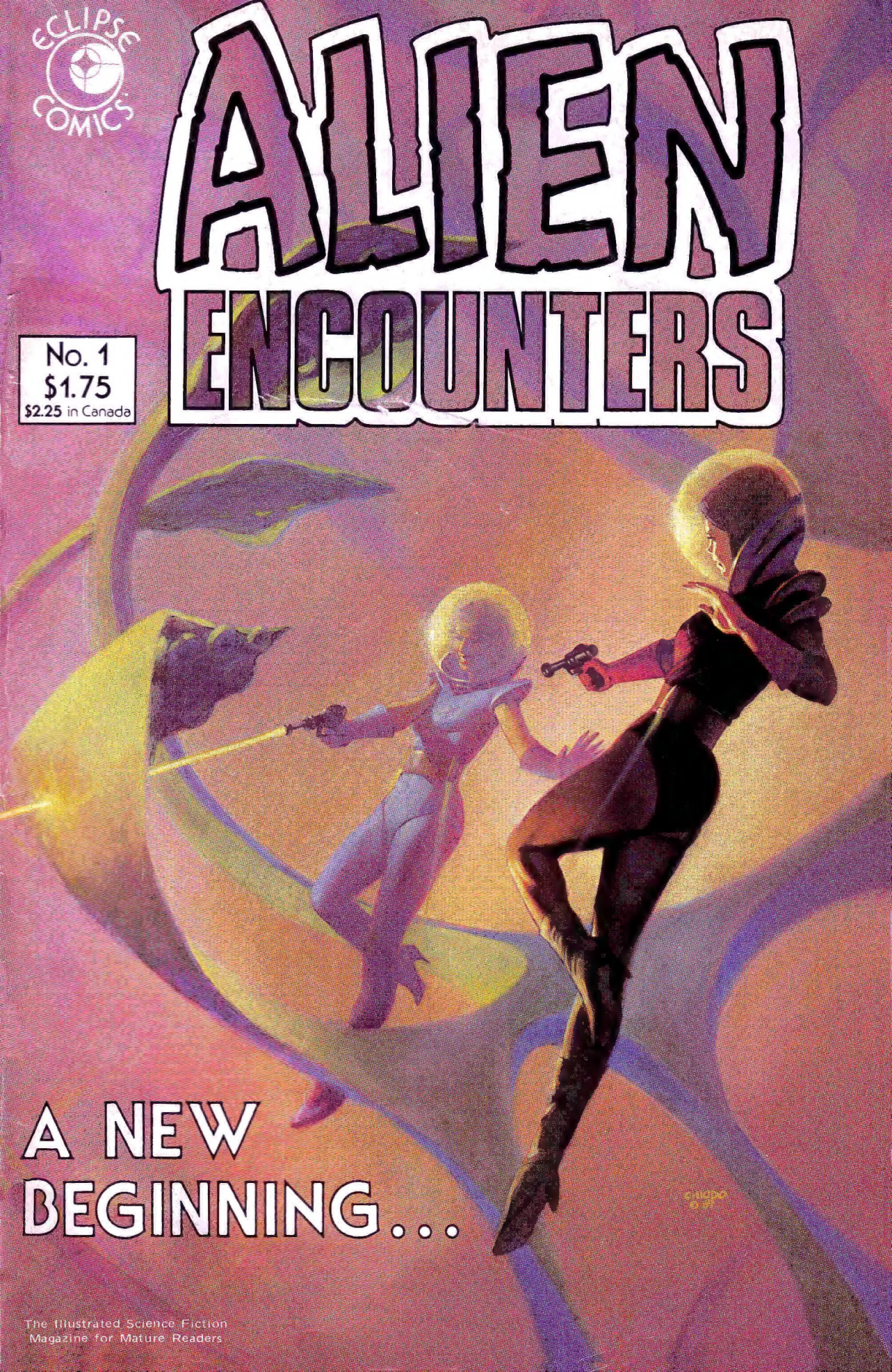
ECLIPSE COMICS
ALIEN ENCOUNTERS
No. 1
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A NEW BEGINNING...
The Illustrated Science Fiction Magazine for Mature Readers

The PENUMBRA

ECLIPSE COMICS • P. O. BOX 199 • GUERNEVILLE, CALIFORNIA 95446

ON THE RACKS

THE MASKED MAN 4
"The Letter" is another winner from B.C. Boyer. The Masked Man's growing fame brings him a fan letter from a mysterious woman . . . and Maggie Brown is jealous!

AZTEC ACE 14
Assassination attempts in ancient Rome, Dark Boys stashed amongst the Corinthian columns, Puer Artemis in slave chains, and Cleopatra peels a grape!

CROSSFIRE 12
Dave Stevens joins the team with an incredible cover featuring "The 24th Annual Death of Marilyn Monroe." A mystery you'll never forget.

JOHN BOLTON's "Halls of Horror" 1
Part 1 of 2 containing short stories illustrated by Bolton never before seen in the U.S. All with a wraparound cover painting.

DNAgents 23
"The Detonator" introduces a new villain with a novel approach to problems: whatever it is, he blows it up! Plus, a tale of Sham's past called "Baby Face."

AXA IN COLOR
In her first color graphic novel, Axa wields her sword to find a better world a hundred years in the future. Romero's paintings throughout.

JOHN BOLTON's "Halls of Horror" 2
The second part of this Micro-Series by one of comics' most popular illustrators. A feast for horror and art fans.

THE FIESTA CAFE

I've always wanted to live in a diner. Not a fast food joint, mind you, but a regular old-fashioned diner, with a neon sign out front and a row of chrome-footed stools along the counter. The kind of place with dark green vinyl booths and a Seeburg jukebox, and checkered linoleum tile floors. The kind of place where a middle-aged waitress named Lucille calls out your order for a grilled cheese sandwich to a middle-aged cook named Joe and nobody asks if Lucille and Joe are married to each other 'cause it doesn't matter much after all these years.

I have always wanted to live in a diner for a number of reasons. I like the way people ask what kinds of pies they have today in a diner, for instance, and i like the way old men say hello to other old men in a diner. I don't like to cook, and if i lived in a diner, i could ask for lots of tomato juice and i wouldn't even mind paying for it by the glass.

There would be a coin operated "Ask Swami" machine (the kind that doubles as a menu holder) and i could get my fortune read for a penny if i lived in a diner. I could always have blue cheese dressing on my salad if i lived in a diner. And at dusk, when they turned the neon sign on, i could watch it flash and glow

FIESTA CAFE
GOOD FOOD if i lived in a diner.

It's dusk right now as i write this, and we are in our new offices, in the old train station overlooking Main Street in Guerneville, California. I'm not in a diner but i think i am, because today we put in our very own neon sign. It hangs in the window above me and to the right. It glows redly, in cursive script:

COMICS

This is a kind of heaven to me, to have a neon sign. No, we didn't "need" it — this isn't a retail store and we don't try to attract passersby to see us work. I dunno. We just wanted it, that's all. And tomorrow we'll be picking up our second neon sign, the one that has our logo on it in red and yellow and green. And after that, John Wilcox, a colourist who lives in Connecticut, will send me one of his famous cheesecakes by Federal Express (he promised to!) and Dean will make some coffee and Sean will find some plates and forks in the back room and maybe Tom Yeates will drop by on his way from Jenner to Santa Rosa. . . and for one moment we will be here, in a diner that doesn't exist outside my mind, forever.

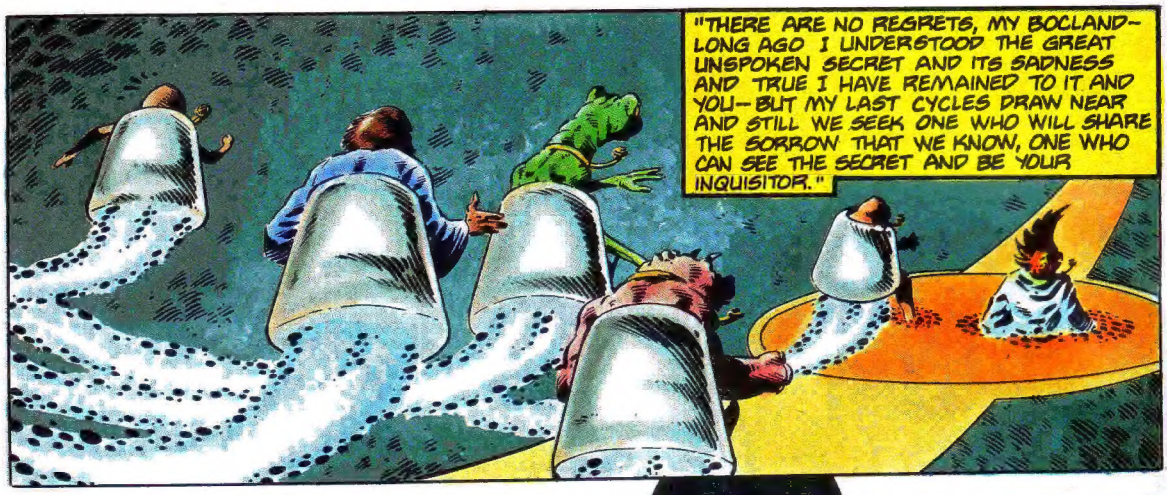
catherine yronwode

IN YOUR HANDS

You asked for it — and here it is! Our first quartet of science fiction stories features work by Eric Dinehart, Mike Gustovich, Marc Hempel, Ken Macklin, Toren V. Smith, Buzz Dixon, and Mike Hoffman, plus a cover by Joe Chiodo. For more info on these contributors, see page 29 — but for pure enjoyment, start reading now!

ALIEN ENCOUNTERS TM no. 1, June 1985. Published by Eclipse Comics, P. O. Box 199, Guerneville, CA 95446. Catherine Yronwode, Editor; Sean Deming, Assistant Editor; Dean Mullaney, Publisher. Cover art ©1985 Joe Chiodo. 'Pretending' story © 1985 Eric Dinehart; art © 1985 Mike Gustovich. 'Gorgonzo' story © 1985 Buzz Dixon; art © 1985 Mike Hoffman. 'Open Season' © 1985 Ken Macklin & Toren V. Smith. 'The Outcast' © 1985 Marc Hempel. All other material © 1985 Eclipse Comics. Film by SM Graphics. Printed in Canada.

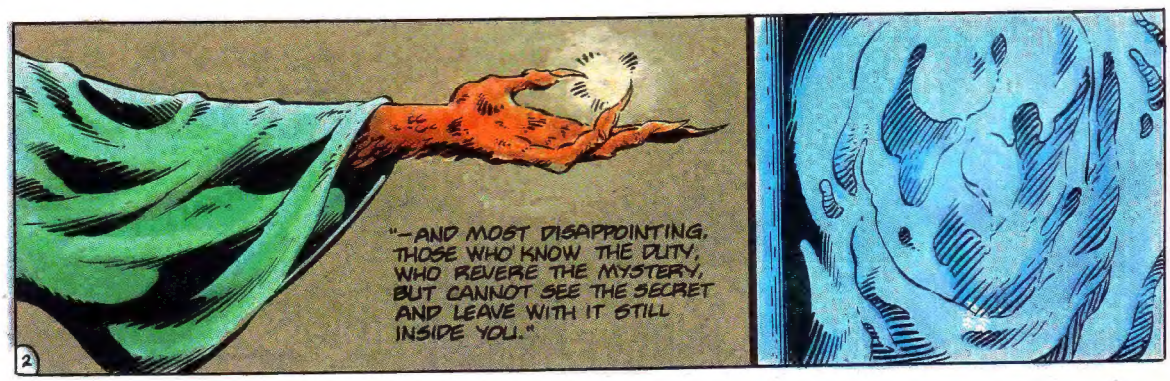
"BOCLAND--ROUGE MOON HOLLOWED OUT BY MY RACE LONG, LONG CYCLES AGO. MACHINES WORK AT YOUR EXCAVATION STILL. BOCLAND--MUSEUM OF MYSTERIES, NURTURED BY OUR SOVEREIGNS OF THE PEOPLES, YOU HOLD THE SECRETS OF ALL FOR THE FUTURE OF ALL."
"BOCLAND--THE WONDEROUS MYSTERIES OF OUR GALAXY REST WITHIN YOUR CHAMBERS--IT WOULD TAKE MORE CYCLES THAN MOST CARE TO SPEND TO SEE YOUR ALL, HEAR YOUR ALL, SENSE YOUR ALL. BOCLAND--SO LARGE YOU WILL NEVER BE FILLED, AND LARGER GROW YOU STILL. YET, AS YOUR INQUISITOR, I HAVE SPENT MY LIFE TRYING TO DO AS MUCH, BOCLAND, MY LOVE."
"BOCLAND--HOME TO ME FOR MY REMAINING CYCLES, AND I, LAS'AK, NOW YOUR LORD AND MASTER. THIS HONOR BESTOWED ON ME BY MY LIEGE AS REWARD AND AS DUTY TO THE PEOPLES. BOCLAND-- THERE IS LITTLE IN MY LIFE THAT IS NOT YOURS. AND ONE DAY ALL YOUR MYSTERIES WILL BE MY SEPULCHER."
PRETENDING
STORY: ERIC DINEHART • ART: MIKE GUSTOVICH • LETTERING: CARRIE SPIEGLE • COLORS: S.OLIFF/S.PARSONS


"THERE ARE NO REGRETS, MY BOCLAND— LONG AGO I UNDERSTOOD THE GREAT UNSPOKEN SECRET AND ITS SADNESS AND TRUE I HAVE REMAINED TO IT AND YOU— BUT MY LAST CYCLES DRAW NEAR AND STILL WE SEEK ONE WHO WILL SHARE THE SORROW THAT WE KNOW, ONE WHO CAN SEE THE SECRET AND BE YOUR INQUISITOR."

"I HAVE WATCHED OUR SQUIRES, AS I WAS WATCHED SO LONG AGO, MY BOCLAND, IN LIKE APPRENTICESHIP TO YOU. THE SECRET CANNOT BE TOLD AND SO THEY COME SEARCHING FOR IT, KNOWING HERE IT IS WITH YOU. I GUIDE AS BEST I CAN, BUT THE SECRET ELUDES THEM."

"HAVE I FAILED, MY BOCLAND? WILL THERE BE NOTHING FOR YOU BUT ESCORTS WHO RETURN FROM SPACE AS MERCHANTS? WILL NOT ONE SQUIRE SEEK THE MYSTERIES BY SEEING BEYOND WHAT IS SEEN? I PLAY AT HAPPINESS, BUT I FEAR FOR YOU, MY BOCLAND, AND FOR MYSELF. THERE IS NO ONE TO CARRY ON THE SECRET."

"I HAVE WATCHED EACH SQUIRE DEPART AND HAVE WATCHED THEM AS INQUISITORS FAIL—THOSE DESPONDENT, OVERWHELMED BY YOUR GRANDEUR--THOSE UNWISE, BELIEVING A GALAXY OF TRUE ARTIFACTS ABOUNDS--"


"—AND MOST DISAPPOINTING, THOSE WHO KNOW THE DUTY, WHO REVERE THE MYSTERY, BUT CANNOT SEE THE SECRET AND LEAVE WITH IT STILL INSIDE YOU."

"I TALK WITH YOU THUS, MY BOCLAND, BECAUSE IT IS TIME AGAIN FOR ANOTHER TO LEAVE. HE SHOWS PROMISE, THIS SQUIRE TC'GAOS—HE NEVER CEASES HIS TALK OF ROAMING SPACE IN SEARCH OF ARTIFACTS—HE TRULY LOVES YOUR MYSTERIES—BUT I AM AGAIN AFRAID—I HAVE NOT IN HIM EITHER SEEN THE SECRET."
"THE SELECTED PEOPLES AND SQUIRE TC'GAOS ARE FINISHED WITH THEIR TIME IN YOU, MY BOCLAND, AND AS ALWAYS I HAVE DONE, THEY WILL VIEW TOGETHER NOW YOUR FINAL MYSTERY. WILL TC'GAOS SEE THE SECRET, MY BOCLAND? WILL HE SEE WHAT THE PEOPLES NEVER SEE?"
"AS YOUR LORD AND MASTER, MY BOCLAND, I WILL OVERSEE THE FINAL ARTIFACT DISPLAY WITH THE SQUIRE AND THE CHOSEN PEOPLES. IN THE BEGINNING I DID THIS FOR THE PEOPLES ONLY, BUT TO SEE A TRUE INQUISITOR IN A SQUIRE, JUST ONE SQUIRE, IT HAS BECOME NOW MY FINAL HOPE."
"IT IS GOOD TO GAZE AGAIN UPON THE TREASURED ARTIFACT I FOUND SO LONG AGO. THE PEOPLES ALL WONDER WHY THEY HAVE NOT BEEN ALLOWED TO SEE THIS PART OF YOU, MY BOCLAND. CURIOUSITY IN THEM I HOPE FOR. MAKE THEM WONDER ALL, MY BOCLAND, WHY THIS MYSTERY IS YOUR LAST."
3

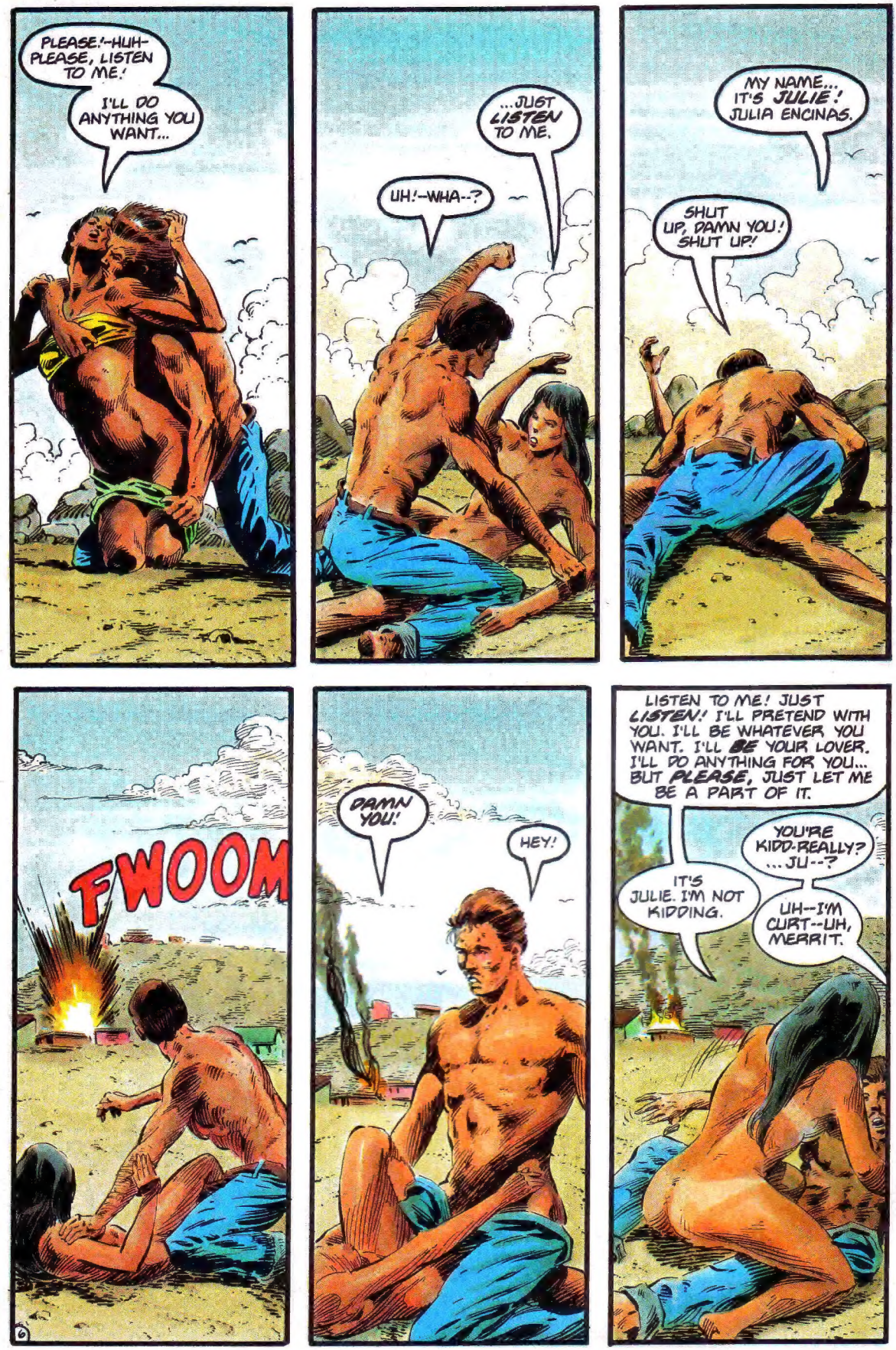
"I TELL THEM SOME SMALL TRUTH, MY BOCLAND. HOW I DISCOVERED OUR TREASURE MANY CYCLES AGO WHEN I WAS A YOUNG AND BRASH INQUISITOR. LET THEM BELIEVE IT IS PRIDE THAT MAKES ME SHOW IT THUS."

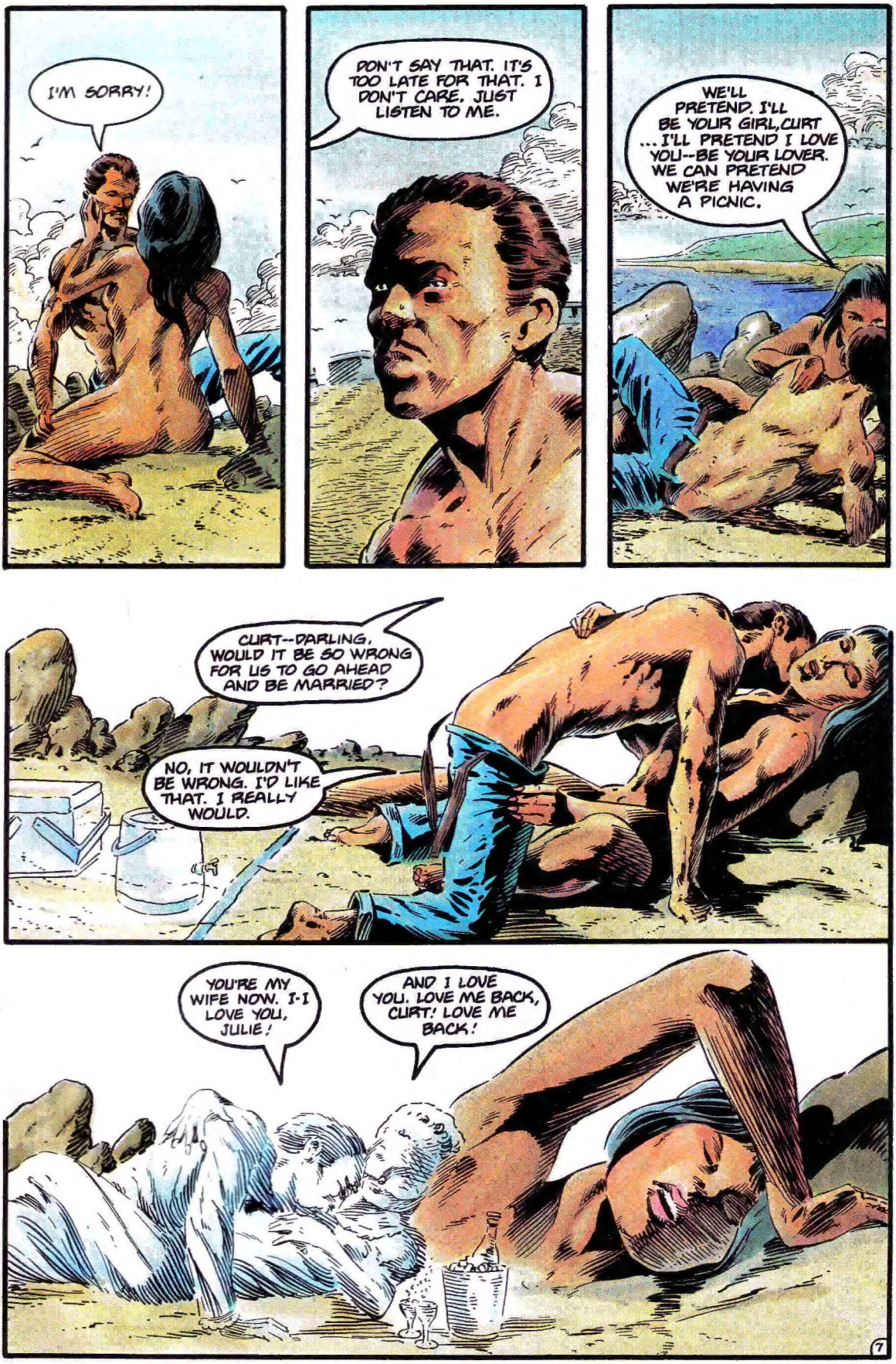
"I GRANT THE CUSTOMARY HONOR NOW TO TC'GAOS. HE WILL TELL THAT I HAVE MANDATED THIS TREASURE TO BE VIEWED THE VERY LAST OF ALL YOUR ARTIFACTS--THAT EVEN HE, SQUIRE TC'GAOS, HAS NEVER SEEN THIS ARTIFACT IN ALL THE CYCLES HE HAS SPENT AS AN ESCORT INSIDE YOU."

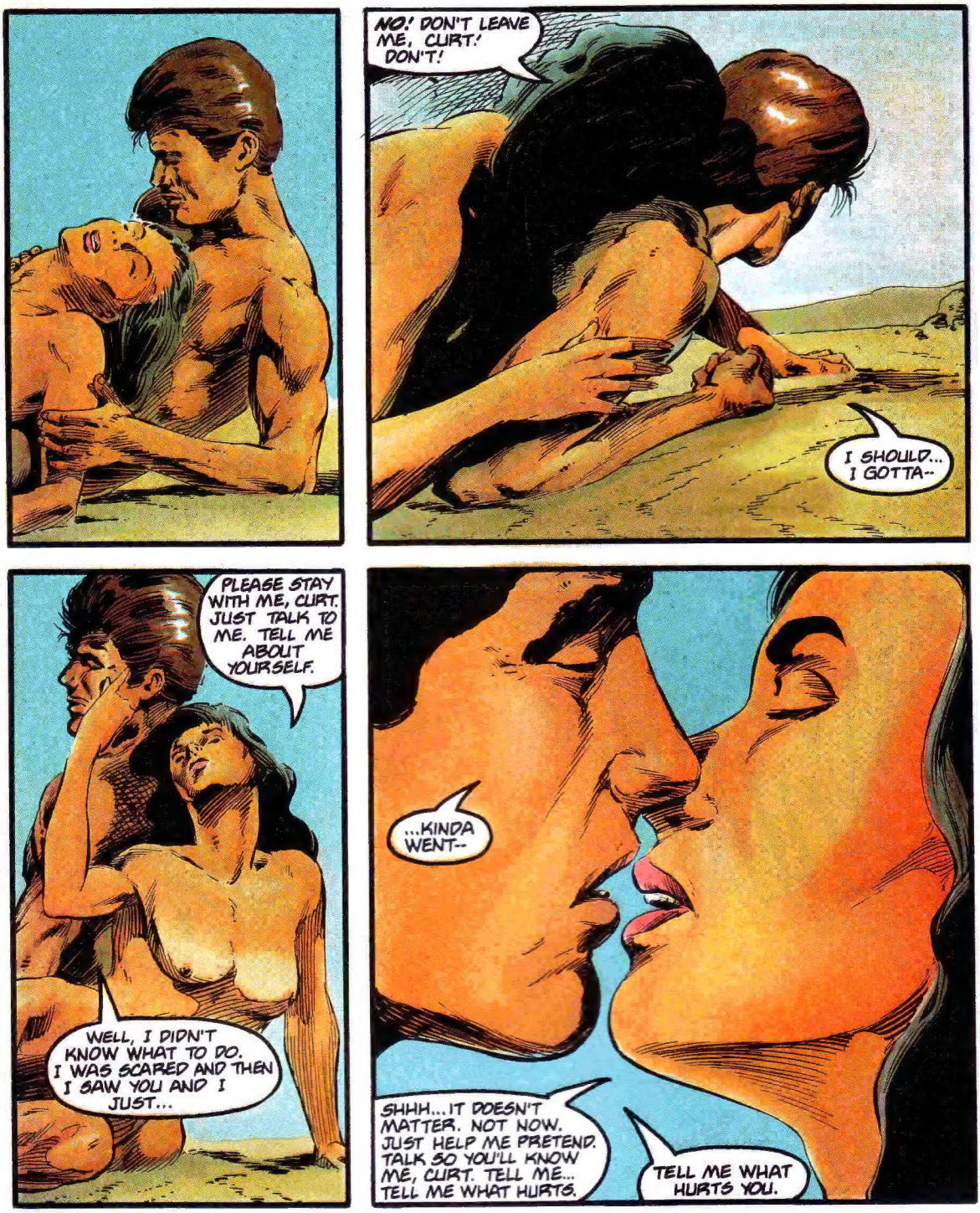
"HE WILL SAY THAT AFTER VIEWING THE ARTIFACT THEY ARE REQUESTED TO LEAVE YOU, MY BOCLAND, NEVER TO RETURN. AND THEN HE WILL OFFER UP MY LITTLE LIE,-- THAT I ASK IT THUS, SO THAT THE BILLIONS OF OTHER PEOPLES IN THE GALAXY WILL BE AFFORDED ROOM TO WONDER AT THE MANY MYSTERIES YOU DISPLAY."

"HE SPEAKS THIS LIE OF MINE, AS IF IT WERE THE TRUTH, FOR TO HIM I HAVE LIED AS WELL. BUT IT MUST BE THUS, FOR MOST OF ALL, THE GREAT SECRET IS HERE. THE PEOPLES WILL LEAVE AND THE MYSTERY WILL LIE TO THEM SILENTLY, FOREVER I PRAY. BUT, MY BOCLAND, TC'GAOS..."

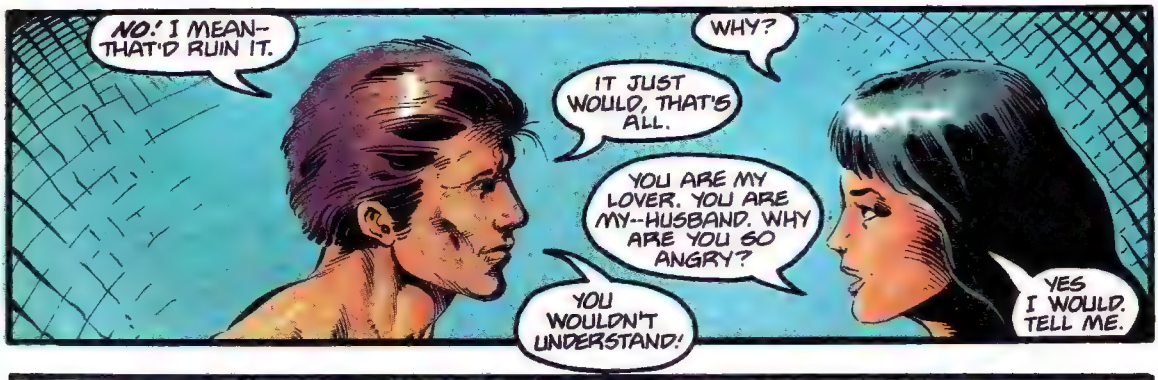
"...WILL HE SEE WHAT CANNOT BE TOLD?"
OOF!
STOP! NO, DON'T! PLEASE, STOP!
OH, GOD. PLEASE, NO! NOT NOW! PLEASE!

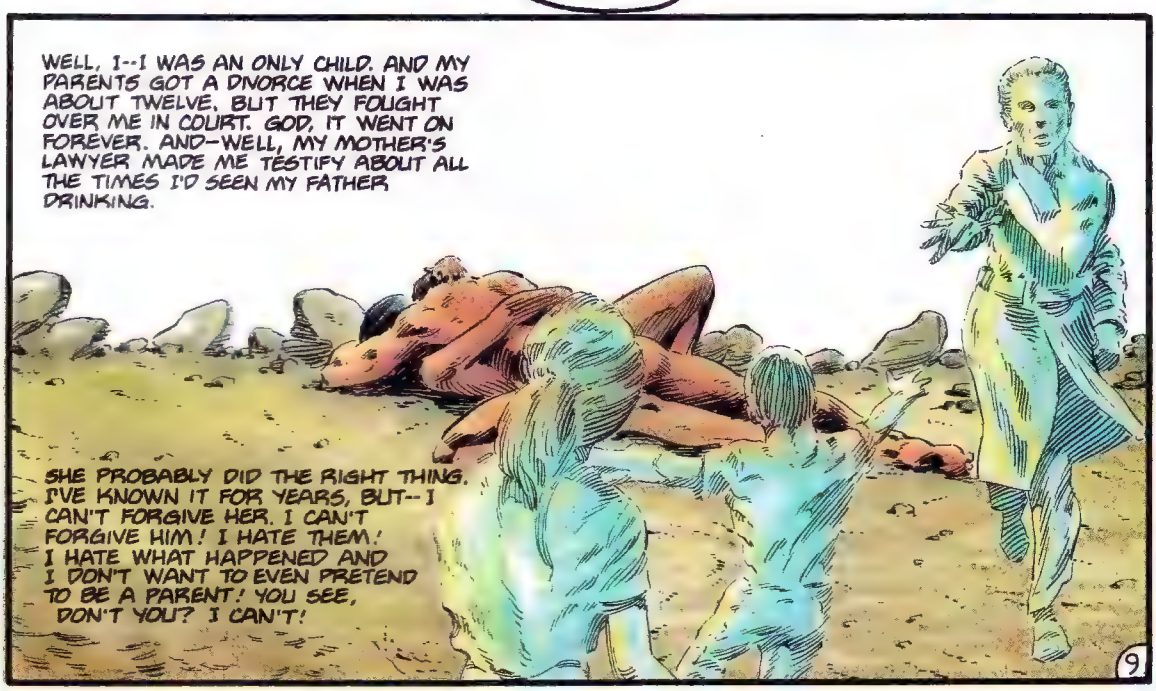

PLEASE!--HUH--PLEASE, LISTEN TO ME!
I'LL DO ANYTHING YOU WANT...
...JUST LISTEN TO ME.
UH!--WHA--?
MY NAME... IT'S JULIE! JULIA ENCINAS.
SHUT UP, DAMN YOU! SHUT UP!
FWOOM
DAMN YOU!
HEY!
LISTEN TO ME! JUST LISTEN! I'LL PRETEND WITH YOU. I'LL BE WHATEVER YOU WANT. I'LL BE YOUR LOVER. I'LL DO ANYTHING FOR YOU... BUT PLEASE, JUST LET ME BE A PART OF IT.
YOU'RE KIDD-REALLY? ...JU--?
IT'S JULIE. I'M NOT KIDDING.
UH--I'M CURT--UH, MERRIT.

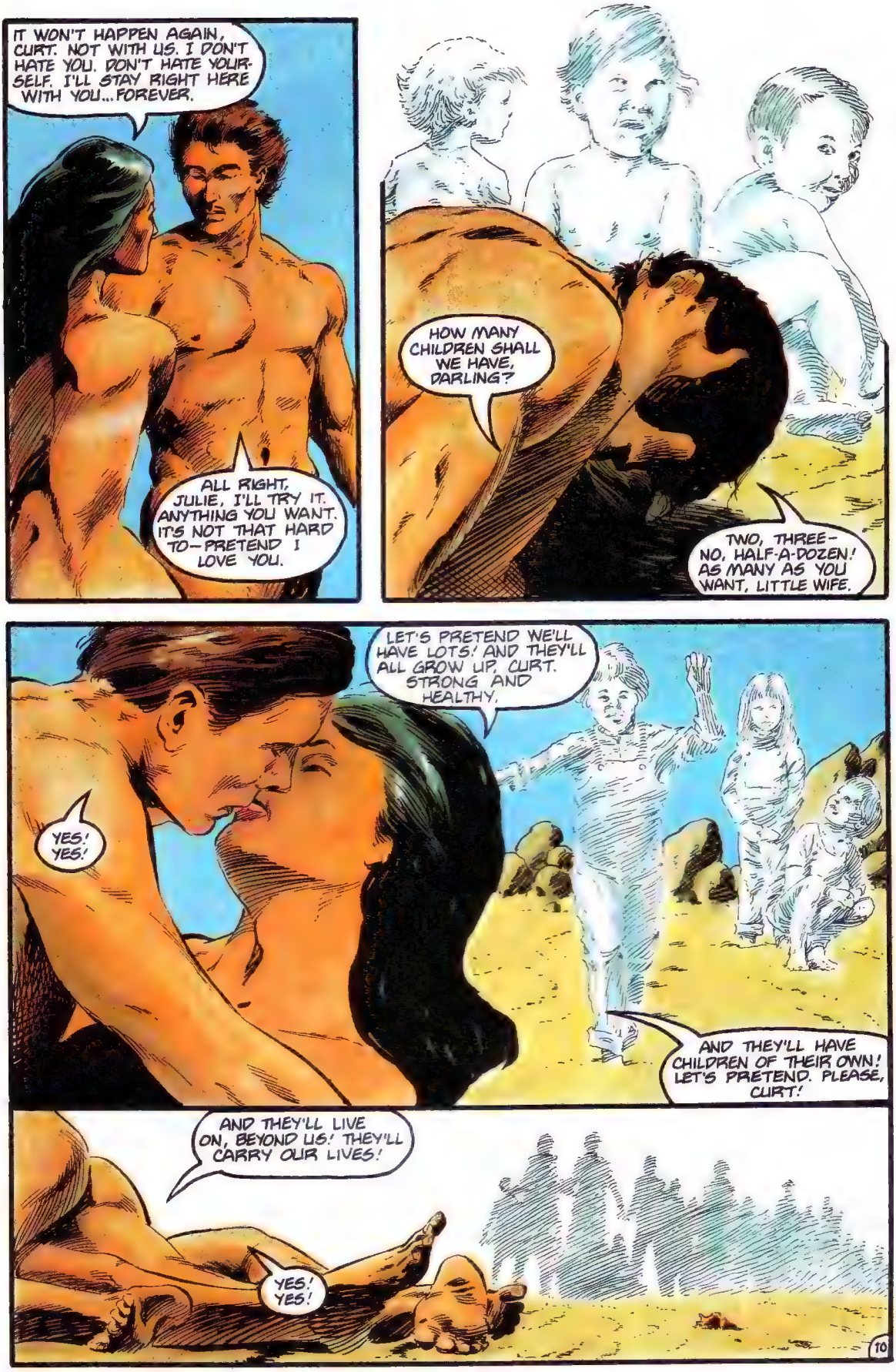

I'M SORRY!
DON'T SAY THAT. IT'S TOO LATE FOR THAT. I DON'T CARE. JUST LISTEN TO ME.
WE'LL PRETEND. I'LL BE YOUR GIRL, CURT ... I'LL PRETEND I LOVE YOU--BE YOUR LOVER. WE CAN PRETEND WE'RE HAVING A PICNIC.
CURT--DARLING, WOULD IT BE SO WRONG FOR US TO GO AHEAD AND BE MARRIED?
NO, IT WOULDN'T BE WRONG. I'D LIKE THAT. I REALLY WOULD.
YOU'RE MY WIFE NOW. I-I LOVE YOU, JULIE!
AND I LOVE YOU. LOVE ME BACK, CURT! LOVE ME BACK!

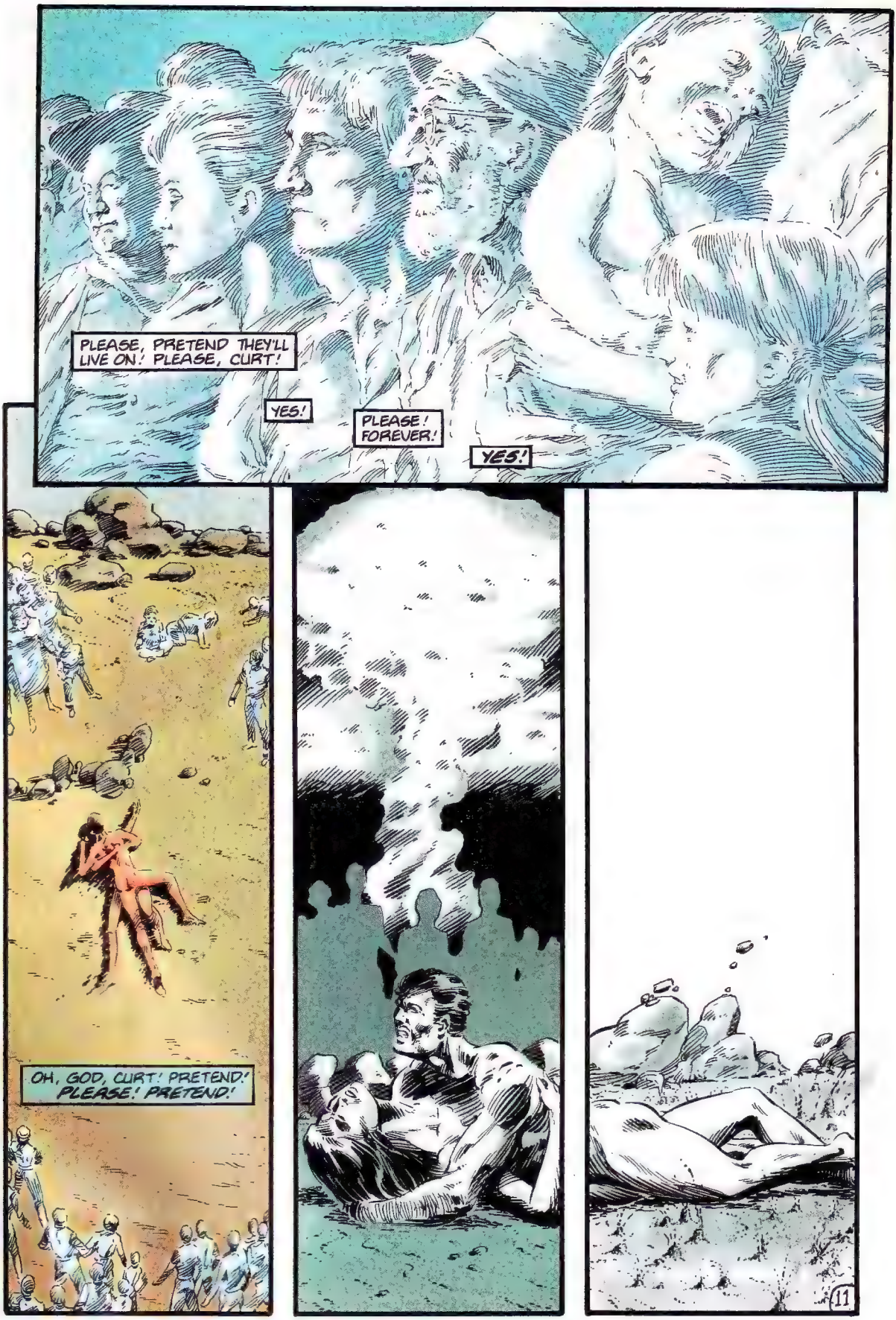

NO! DON'T LEAVE ME, CURT! DON'T!
I SHOULD... I GOTTA--
PLEASE STAY WITH ME, CURT. JUST TALK TO ME. TELL ME ABOUT YOURSELF.
WELL, I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT TO DO. I WAS SCARED AND THEN I SAW YOU AND I JUST...
...KINDA WENT--
SHHH...IT DOESN'T MATTER. NOT NOW. JUST HELP ME PRETEND. TALK SO YOU'LL KNOW ME, CURT. TELL ME... TELL ME WHAT HURTS.
TELL ME WHAT HURTS YOU.
OH...WHEN I WAS A LITTLE GIRL, I RAN AWAY FROM HOME. I WANTED TO RUN AWAY SO BADLY. IT WAS STUPID OF ME, BUT I HATED THE BARRIO SO MUCH. I--I TOOK A RIDE WITH AN OLD MAN; A STRANGER IN A BEAUTIFUL CAR. HE SAID HE WOULD TAKE ME TO HIS HOME IN THE VALLEY.
HE BEGAN...TO TOUCH ME. I JUMPED OUT OF THE CAR. EVEN THOUGH I HAD TO WALK SEVERAL MILES HOME, NO ONE MISSED ME.

I NEVER TOLD ANYONE WHAT I DID. I NEVER HAVE. I WAS SO ASHAMED. I COULD NEVER TELL THEM THAT I WANTED TO ESCAPE. I COULDN'T TELL THEM I HATED MY LIFE.
I WAS SO ... STUPID.
NO, NO YOU WEREN'T. I UNDERSTAND. I'VE FELT THAT WAY, TOO.
LISTEN...I JUST GRADUATED. YOU CAN PRETEND ANYTHING YOU WANT WITH ME. WE CAN MAKE IT TOGETHER. I'LL START MY OWN BUSINESS AND I'LL GIVE YOU ANYTHING YOU WANT.
I WANT CHILDREN.


NO! I MEAN--THAT'D RUIN IT.
WHY?
IT JUST WOULD, THAT'S ALL.
YOU ARE MY LOVER. YOU ARE MY--HUSBAND. WHY ARE YOU SO ANGRY?
YOU WOULDN'T UNDERSTAND!
YES I WOULD. TELL ME.


WELL, I--I WAS AN ONLY CHILD. AND MY PARENTS GOT A DIVORCE WHEN I WAS ABOUT TWELVE. BUT THEY FOUGHT OVER ME IN COURT. GOD, IT WENT ON FOREVER. AND--WELL, MY MOTHER'S LAWYER MADE ME TESTIFY ABOUT ALL THE TIMES I'D SEEN MY FATHER DRINKING.
SHE PROBABLY DID THE RIGHT THING. I'VE KNOWN IT FOR YEARS, BUT--I CAN'T FORGIVE HER. I CAN'T FORGIVE HIM! I HATE THEM! I HATE WHAT HAPPENED AND I DON'T WANT TO EVEN PRETEND TO BE A PARENT! YOU SEE, DON'T YOU? I CAN'T!


IT WON'T HAPPEN AGAIN, CURT. NOT WITH US. I DON'T HATE YOU. DON'T HATE YOURSELF. I'LL STAY RIGHT HERE WITH YOU... FOREVER.
ALL RIGHT, JULIE, I'LL TRY IT. ANYTHING YOU WANT. IT'S NOT THAT HARD TO—PRETEND I LOVE YOU.
HOW MANY CHILDREN SHALL WE HAVE, DARLING?
TWO, THREE—NO, HALF-A-DOZEN! AS MANY AS YOU WANT, LITTLE WIFE.
LET'S PRETEND WE'LL HAVE LOTS! AND THEY'LL ALL GROW UP, CURT. STRONG AND HEALTHY.
YES! YES!
AND THEY'LL HAVE CHILDREN OF THEIR OWN! LET'S PRETEND. PLEASE, CURT!
AND THEY'LL LIVE ON, BEYOND US! THEY'LL CARRY OUR LIVES!
YES! YES!


PLEASE, PRETEND THEY'LL LIVE ON! PLEASE, CURT!
YES!
PLEASE! FOREVER!
YES!
OH, GOD, CURT! PRETEND! PLEASE! PRETEND!

"ONCE AGAIN THE PEOPLES DEPART. MEMORIES ARE ALL THEY WILL HAVE OF US. I CAN ONLY HOPE THEY PONDER AS I WOULD WISH."
"BUT MY BOCLAND, HE REMAINS, THIS SQUIRE TC'GAOS. MY BOCLAND, HE UNDERSTANDS! I SEE IT IN HIM. AT LAST, AT LAST! ONE TO BE YOUR INQUISITOR! ONE TO CARRY ON FOR US, TO QUEST ANEW FOR MYSTERIES. HE DOES NOT SPEAK, MY BOCLAND! HE SEES THE GREAT SECRET AND KNOWS...
"...THE SECRET CANNOT BE TOLD!"
END

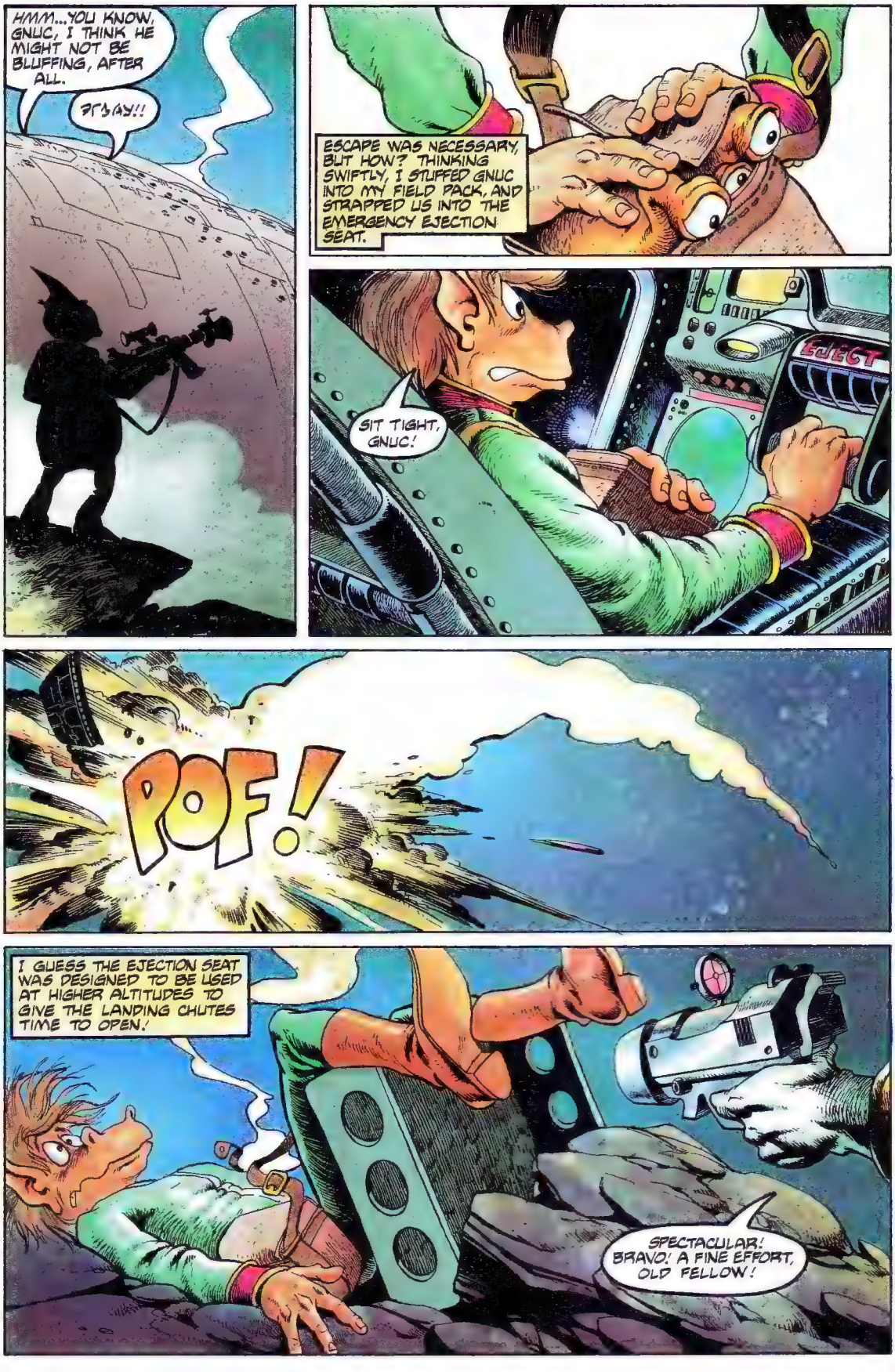
IT COULDN'T HAVE BEEN PIRATES! UNLESS YOU WERE ON A MAPPING ASSIGNMENT LIKE MY CO-PILOT AND I WERE, THERE WAS NO REASON TO BE HERE. TWENTY LIGHT MINUTES FROM NOWHERE--AND YET WE WERE BEING FIRED UPON!
GNUC, GET ME LASER CONTACT WITH THOSE LUNATICS!
SCOT!!
THIS IS FEDERATION RANGER PETE PETROGRADE HERE! ALRIGHT, BLAST-HAPPY, WHAT'S THE BIG IDEA?!
RANGER RETROGRADE, I AM COLONEL HAMMERFACE--HUNTING IS MY SPORT, AND MY PROFESSION. MERELY SURRENDER YOUR UNUSUAL CO-PILOT TO ME, AND WE'LL BOTH BE ON OUR WAY WITH A MINIMUM OF FUSS.
WHAT?! FORGET IT, PLUG UGLY, YOU'RE BLUFFING! AND THE NAME IS PETROGRADE, HAMMERFISH!
RETROGRADE...I NEVER BLUFF!
OH-OH.
OPEN SEASON

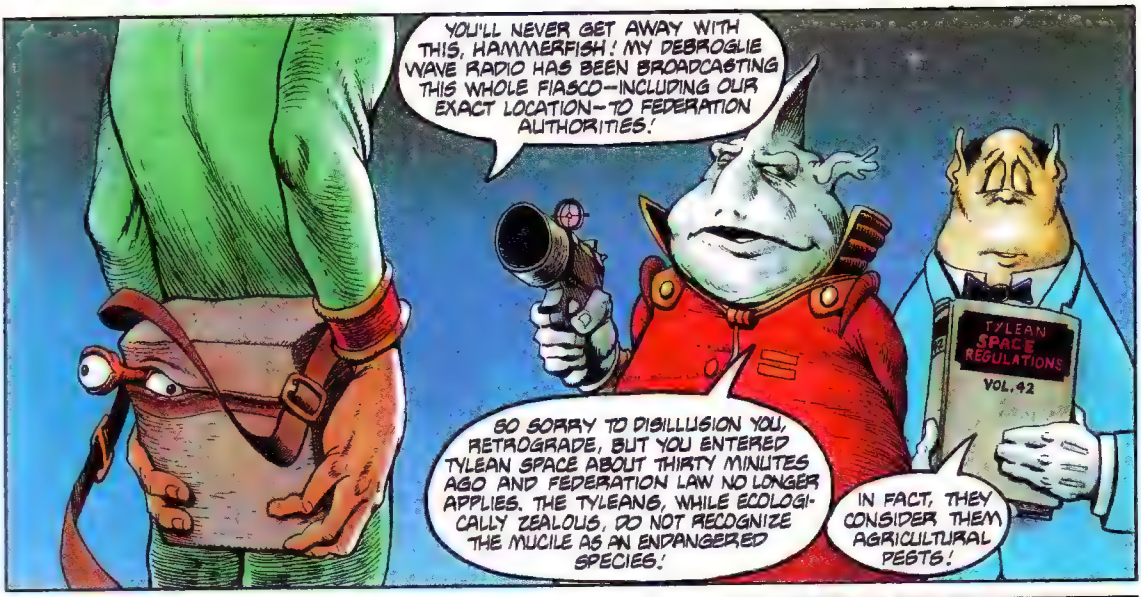
STORY AND ART BY KEN MACKLIN/ SCRIPT BY TOREN SMITH/ LETTERING BY CARRIE SPIEGLE

COLORS BY STEVE OLIFF

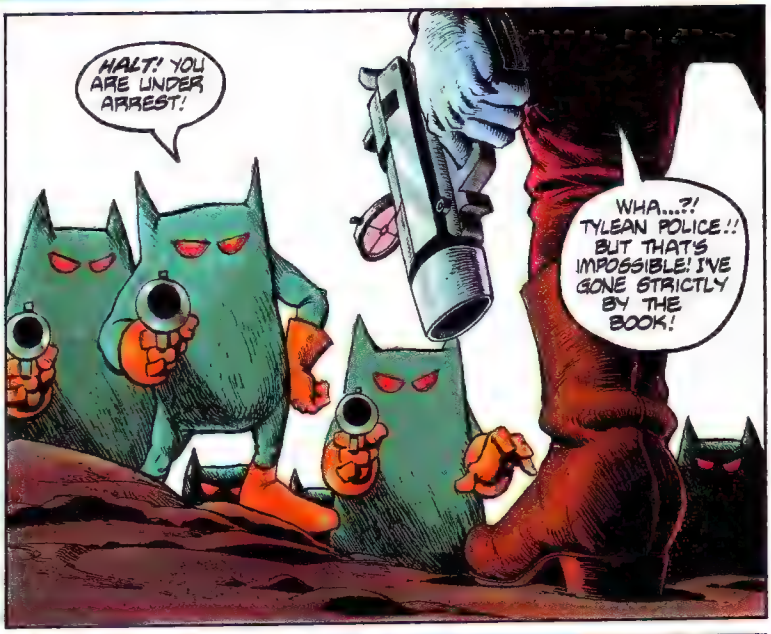
MAIN TUBES ARE OUT, GNUC, BUT DON'T WORRY! I'M A GENIUS AT DEAD-STICK LANDINGS!
RETROGRADE, IN ORDER TO CONSERVE BOTH MY AMMUNITION, AND YOUR PRESENTLY HYPOTHETICAL OLD AGE, I SUGGEST YOU IMMEDIATELY PUT DOWN AND SURRENDER!
WUMP!
!!AIAIAE
GNUC, UNLESS YOU WANT YOUR EYESTALKS TIED INTO A CLOVE HITCH, SILENCE IS ADVISED.
HEY, I REMEMBER YOU, HAMMERFISH! WEREN'T YOU ARRESTED FOR POACHING ON TALUS IV ABOUT FIFTEEN YEARS AGO?
ANCIENT HISTORY, RETROGRADE! MY METHODS HAVE RATHER CHANGED SINCE THOSE DAYS OF MY IMPETUOUS YOUTH. I AM STILL COMMISSIONED BY PRIVATE INTERESTS TO HUNT THE MOST ELUSIVE SPECIES IN THE GALAXY--BUT SCRUPULOUSLY WITHIN THE LAW.
TODAY, DEAR FELLOW, I AM HUNTING THE MUCILE--THE MOST COVETED SKIN IN NINE SYSTEMS. YOUR CO-PILOT IS JUST SUCH AN ANIMAL. YOU WILL TURN HIM OVER TO ME...OR BE BLOWN TO FLINDERS!
1045

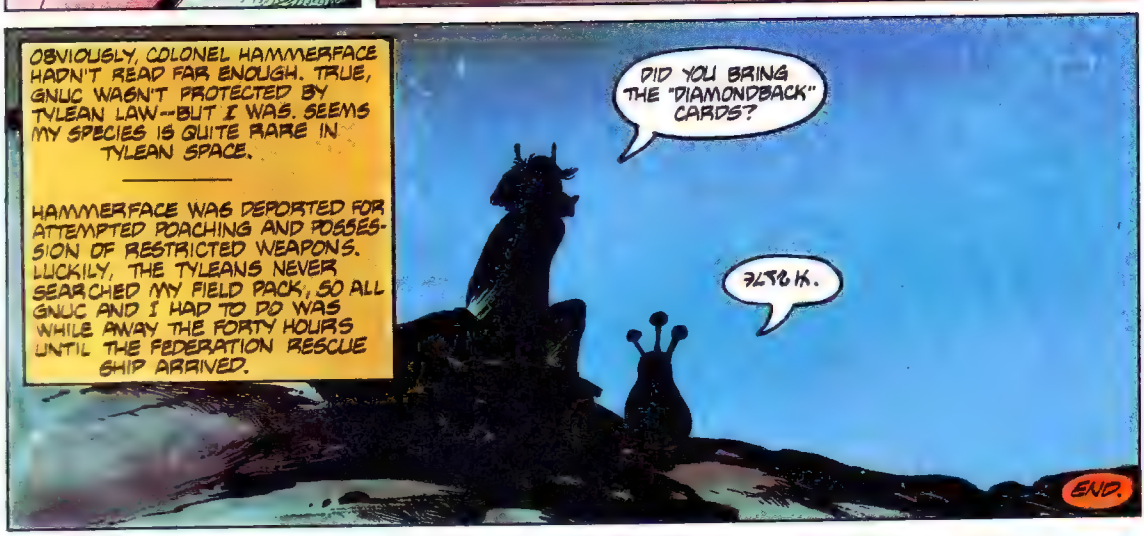
ƧſIΣMIΓ!!
YOU POMPOUS CROOK! MY THREE-EYED FRIEND IS A PROTECTED SPECIES, PRACTICALLY A FEDERATION CITIZEN, AND DEFINITELY OFF LIMITS TO A BLOATED FASCIST BUTCHER LIKE YOURSELF, SO GET LOST OR SOMETHING!
VERY WELL. REGRETTABLY, I SHALL BE FORCED TO BOARD YOUR CRIPPLED VESSEL AND REMOVE THE CREATURE MYSELF!
THAT OVERBEARING NERK! HE TALKS BIG, BUT JUST ONE GLIMPSE OF THIS "ANNIHILATOR 12" SPECIAL ISSUE BLASTER WILL CHANGE HIS TUNE!
OKAY, HAMMERFISH, LET'S SKIP THE GARBAGE! I'M NO SITTING DUCK, SO CUT YOUR LOSSES AND HIT THE SKY, PAL!
BLADDADOW!
BLAM BLAM!
PAKOW-POW!
PTWEEE
PTWEEOW!
ALAS, YOU ARE A FOOL, RETROGRADE. A SPORTING ONE, BUT A FOOL NONETHELESS.
THANK YOU, JEEVES. WOULD YOU HAND ME MY ALKADIAN DUAL ACTION 2001 WITH THE ANTI-MATTER PROJECTILES...OR PERHAPS THE RUTHERGIAN MATTER DISMANTLER...


HMM...YOU KNOW, GNUC, I THINK HE MIGHT NOT BE BLUFFING, AFTER ALL.
ｱﾌﾞﾅｲ!!
ESCAPE WAS NECESSARY, BUT HOW? THINKING SWIFTLY, I STUFFED GNUC INTO MY FIELD PACK, AND STRAPPED US INTO THE EMERGENCY EJECTION SEAT.
EJECT
SIT TIGHT, GNUC!
POF!
I GUESS THE EJECTION SEAT WAS DESIGNED TO BE USED AT HIGHER ALTITUDES TO GIVE THE LANDING CHUTES TIME TO OPEN.
SPECTACULAR! BRAVO! A FINE EFFORT, OLD FELLOW!


YOU'LL NEVER GET AWAY WITH THIS, HAMMERFISH! MY DEBROGLIE WAVE RADIO HAS BEEN BROADCASTING THIS WHOLE FIASCO--INCLUDING OUR EXACT LOCATION--TO FEDERATION AUTHORITIES!
TYLEAN SPACE REGULATIONS VOL. 42
SO SORRY TO DISILLUSION YOU, RETROGRADE, BUT YOU ENTERED TYLEAN SPACE ABOUT THIRTY MINUTES AGO AND FEDERATION LAW NO LONGER APPLIES. THE TYLEANS, WHILE ECOLOGICALLY ZEALOUS, DO NOT RECOGNIZE THE MUCILE AS AN ENDANGERED SPECIES!
IN FACT, THEY CONSIDER THEM AGRICULTURAL PESTS!

I ALWAYS GO BY THE REGULATIONS... SO HAND HIM OVER!


HALT! YOU ARE UNDER ARREST!
WHA...?! TYLEAN POLICE!! BUT THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE! I'VE GONE STRICTLY BY THE BOOK!


OBVIOUSLY, COLONEL HAMMERFACE HADN'T READ FAR ENOUGH. TRUE, GNUC WASN'T PROTECTED BY TYLEAN LAW--BUT I WAS. SEEMS MY SPECIES IS QUITE RARE IN TYLEAN SPACE.
HAMMERFACE WAS DEPORTED FOR ATTEMPTED POACHING AND POSSESSION OF RESTRICTED WEAPONS. LUCKILY, THE TYLEANS NEVER SEARCHED MY FIELD PACK, SO ALL GNUC AND I HAD TO DO WAS WHILE AWAY THE FORTY HOURS UNTIL THE FEDERATION RESCUE SHIP ARRIVED.
DID YOU BRING THE "DIAMONDBACK" CARDS?
ZLTCK.
END.

WITHOUT A DOUBT, THIS WAS A TEMPLE IN ANCIENT TIMES BEFORE THE GREAT CONTAMINATION.
THE PEOPLE OF THE 20TH CENTURY STILL HAD FAITH IN THE SUPERNATURAL.
EVERLASTING RHETORICS ABOUT THE GOOD AND THE BAD... UNTIL THEY THEMSELVES FINALLY PUT AN END TO IT ALL.

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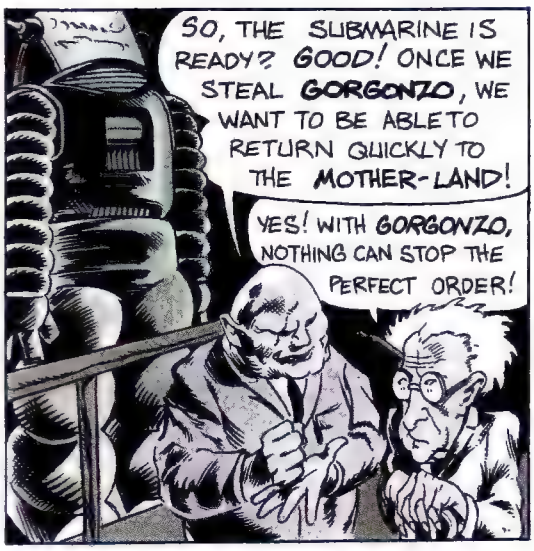
AXA

IN COLOR


SO, THE SUBMARINE IS READY? GOOD! ONCE WE STEAL GORGONZO, WE WANT TO BE ABLE TO RETURN QUICKLY TO THE MOTHER-LAND!
YES! WITH GORGONZO, NOTHING CAN STOP THE PERFECT ORDER!

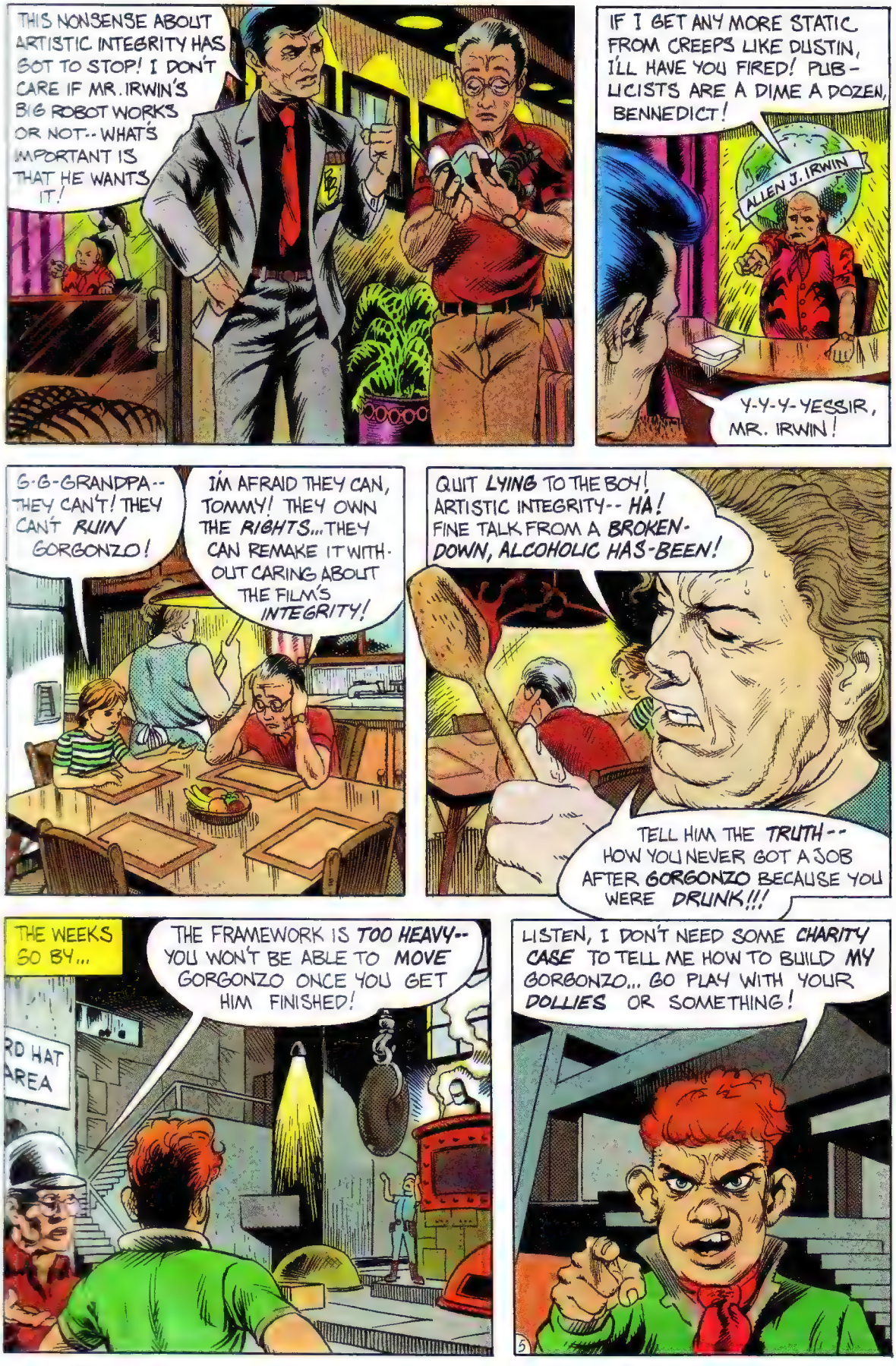
DIE, TRAITOR! NOBODY STABS THE UNITED STATES IN THE BACK WHILE GORGONZO IS AROUND!
NO! GORGONZO HAS BEEN ACTIVATED! NO! NO! AAAARRGH!
I MUST ALERT THE ARMY!

Script: Buzz Dixon/Art & Letters: Mike Hoffman/Colors: Philip DeWalt

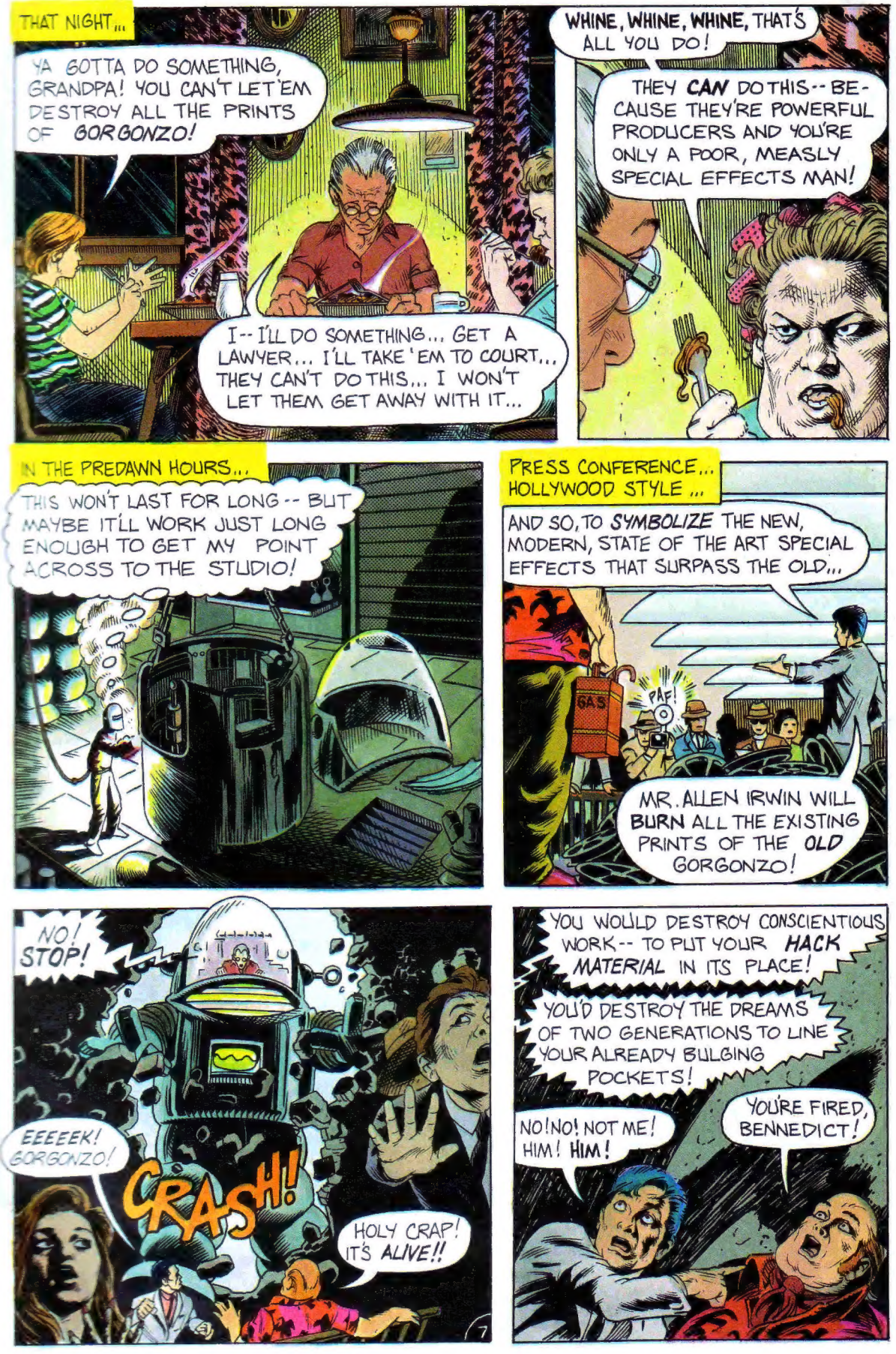
YOU CALL THAT A MOVIE? JEEZ, WHEN WAS THAT MADE? FORTY-FIFTY YEARS AGO?
IT WAS MADE IN 1953, MR. IRWIN.
DON'T INTERRUPT ME, BENNEDICT!
NO, SIR!
WHAT A PIECE OF CRAP! SHLOCK JUNK!
--BUT IT'S SAFER TO REMAKE SHLOCK JUNK THAN TO TRY SOMETHING NEW!
SO I'M GONNA REMAKE THIS PIECE OF CRAP... MAKE SOME BIG BUCKS!
YOU CERTAINLY SHOULD, SIR! RESEARCH TELLS US THAT GORGONZO IS REGARDED AS A CLASSIC! ITS THEMES OF UNRECOGNIZED...
SCREEN ROOM
STUDIO B
YEAH, THEM "THEMES". I HATE 'EM, SO I'M GONNA REMAKE IT MY WAY!
I'M GONNA DO IT BIGGER--- BETTER! GET RID OF THOSE DUMB SUB-PLOTS-- PUT SOME TEEN-AGE GIRLS IN IT-- VIDEO GAMES GET A PUNK-ROCK SCORE--
GRACIE? GET ME THE HEAD OF THE STUDIO--TELL HIM I'LL NEED 45 MILLION TO REDO GORGONZO! THEN CALL MY BROKER, BUY SOME MORE STOCK; CALL MY AUTO DEALER, BUY ME A NEW JAG; CALL MY PUSHER, BUY MORE COKE!
IF I MAY BE SO BOLD, MR. IRWIN, YOU SHOULD HAVE SOME TIE-IN WITH THE OLD MOVIE--- THE FANS WILL EXPECT IT!
SEE GORGONZO
SCREW THE FANS! I'M NOT HIRING ANY-ONE WHO'LL DISAGREE WITH ME!
MMMMMM, YES, GRACIE!
"ACTUALLY, I WAS THINKING OF THE OLD SPECIAL EFFECTS EXPERT-- MICKEY DUSTIN! HE'S OLD, RETIRED AND CHEAP!"
YOU SAY YOU'RE REMAKING GORGONZO?!?
2

GUESS WHAT! THE STUDIO'S REMAKING GORGONZO--
AND THEY WANT ME TO COME OUT OF RETIREMENT TO DO THE SPECIAL EFFECTS!
WOW, GRANDPA! THAT'S GREAT!
HMMPH! I HOPE YOU'RE GETTING PAID FOR THIS!
OF COURSE I'M GETTING PAID! WHAT KIND OF AN IDIOT DO YOU TAKE ME FOR?
HMMPH!
ARE YOU GONNA DO LIKE BEFORE, GRANDPA? WITH STOP-MOTION ANIMATION?
YOU BET, TOMMY! GORGONZO WAS THE HIGH POINT OF MY LIFE! IT'S A CLASSIC!
THOUSANDS-- MILLIONS OF PEOPLE LOVE THE FILM!
I'M NOT GOING TO DISAPPOINT THEM!
SPECIAL EFFECTS ARE A DELICATE ART-- A PATIENT ART-- IT'S NOT SOMETHING YOU CAN THROW TOGETHER ON A SLAP-DASH BASIS!
TO BE CONVINCING, SPECIAL EFFECTS HAVE TO BE REALER THAN REAL!
SPECIAL EFFECTS HAVE GOT TO HAVE INTEGRITY, TOMMY, IF THEY'RE TO BE BELIEVED!
SAME AS ANYBODY ELSE...
3

THE NEXT DAY...
CHEAP-JACK TOYS! THIS IS A BIG PRODUCTION, DUSTIN! THINK BIG!!!
THESE ARE THE ORIGINAL ANIMATION MODELS FROM GORGONZO-- THEY'RE RATHER DELICATE-- BUT THEY SHOULD BE ABLE TO STAND UP TO ANOTHER ROUND OF SHOOTING...
FORTUNATELY I GOT A NEPHEW WHO KNOWS HOW TO THINK BIG! WE'RE GONNA BUILD GORGONZO FULL-SCALE!!
60 Ft.
ORGONZO
SMASH!
GET THAT OLD GEEK OUT OF MY SIGHT! NOBODY ARGUES WITH ALLEN J. IRWIN! WE'RE DOING THIS MOVIE MY WAY--OR ELSE!
MR. IRWIN, THE COST WOULD BE PROHIBITIVE! IT WOULD BE TOO HEAVY-- HYDRAULICS AND STEEL FRAMES AND ALL-- YOU WOULDN'T HAVE AS MUCH FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT--
SNIF!
ARE YOU CRAZY? YOU WANT TO LOSE YOUR JOB?
4


THIS NONSENSE ABOUT ARTISTIC INTEGRITY HAS GOT TO STOP! I DON'T CARE IF MR. IRWIN'S BIG ROBOT WORKS OR NOT-- WHAT'S IMPORTANT IS THAT HE WANTS IT!
IF I GET ANY MORE STATIC FROM CREEPS LIKE DUSTIN, I'LL HAVE YOU FIRED! PUBLICISTS ARE A DIME A DOZEN, BENNEDICT!
ALLEN J. IRWIN
Y-Y-Y-YESSIR, MR. IRWIN!
G-G-GRANDPA-- THEY CAN'T! THEY CAN'T RUIN GORGONZO!
I'M AFRAID THEY CAN, TOMMY! THEY OWN THE RIGHTS... THEY CAN REMAKE IT WITHOUT CARING ABOUT THE FILM'S INTEGRITY!
QUIT LYING TO THE BOY! ARTISTIC INTEGRITY-- HA! FINE TALK FROM A BROKEN-DOWN, ALCOHOLIC HAS-BEEN!
TELL HIM THE TRUTH-- HOW YOU NEVER GOT A JOB AFTER GORGONZO BECAUSE YOU WERE DRUNK!!!
THE WEEKS GO BY...
THE FRAMEWORK IS TOO HEAVY-- YOU WON'T BE ABLE TO MOVE GORGONZO ONCE YOU GET HIM FINISHED!
RD HAT AREA
LISTEN, I DON'T NEED SOME CHARITY CASE TO TELL ME HOW TO BUILD MY GORGONZO... GO PLAY WITH YOUR DOLLIES OR SOMETHING!
5

FINALLY...
SEVENTEEN MILLION --
FOR THAT?!?!?
IT'LL BE LAUGHED OFF THE SCREEN! IT DOESN'T NEARLY MEASURE UP TO THE ORIGINAL!
I TRIED EXPLAINING TO YOUR NEPHEW WHAT HE WAS DOING WRONG--
--HIS DESIGN WAS POOR, HE USED THE WRONG MATERIALS,
HE-- MMPHH!
WHAT ARE YOU SAYING?!?! YOU DON'T BAD MOUTH MR. IRWIN'S RELATIVES!
ALL I'VE GOT TO WORRY ABOUT IS PEOPLE COMPARING THIS TO THE ORIGINAL GOR-GONZO! SO...
IF I DESTROY ALL PRINTS OF THE ORIGINAL, NOBODY CAN MAKE ANY UNFAIR COMPARISONS!
BRILLIANT, MR. IRWIN-- BRILLIANT! HOW DO YOU COME UP WITH THESE IDEAS?
BECAUSE I'M THE PRO-DUCER AND YOU'RE THE PUBLICIST, SCHMUCK!
DESTROY ALL PRINTS OF GORGONZO?!?! MY MASTERPIECE... GONE FOREVER?
6


THAT NIGHT...
YA GOTTA DO SOMETHING, GRANDPA! YOU CAN'T LET 'EM DESTROY ALL THE PRINTS OF GORGONZO!
I-- I'LL DO SOMETHING... GET A LAWYER... I'LL TAKE 'EM TO COURT... THEY CAN'T DO THIS... I WON'T LET THEM GET AWAY WITH IT...
WHINE, WHINE, WHINE, THAT'S ALL YOU DO!
THEY CAN DO THIS-- BECAUSE THEY'RE POWERFUL PRODUCERS AND YOU'RE ONLY A POOR, MEASLY SPECIAL EFFECTS MAN!
IN THE PREDAWN HOURS...
THIS WON'T LAST FOR LONG-- BUT MAYBE IT'LL WORK JUST LONG ENOUGH TO GET MY POINT ACROSS TO THE STUDIO!
PRESS CONFERENCE... HOLLYWOOD STYLE ...
AND SO, TO SYMBOLIZE THE NEW, MODERN, STATE OF THE ART SPECIAL EFFECTS THAT SURPASS THE OLD...
GAS
PAF!
MR. ALLEN IRWIN WILL BURN ALL THE EXISTING PRINTS OF THE OLD GORGONZO!
NO! STOP!
EEEEEK! GORGONZO!
CRASH!
HOLY CRAP! IT'S ALIVE!!
YOU WOULD DESTROY CONSCIENTIOUS WORK-- TO PUT YOUR HACK MATERIAL IN ITS PLACE!
YOU'D DESTROY THE DREAMS OF TWO GENERATIONS TO LINE YOUR ALREADY BULGING POCKETS!
NO! NO! NOT ME! HIM! HIM!
YOU'RE FIRED, BENNEDICT!

WELL, YOU'LL NEVER GET THE CHANCE TO DO IT AGAIN!
WAIT! WHAT DO YOU WANT? POINTS? A PERCENTAGE DEAL? NO-- AAAAARGH!
KER-SQUISH!
THIS BABY WON'T HANG TOGETHER MUCH LONGER - GOTTA GET MY MESSAGE ACROSS...
IF YOU CAN HEAR ME, DON'T BE ALARMED! MY ACTION IS A PROTEST AGAINST THE WHORES AND PIMPS WHO TAKE THE GREATEST ARTISTIC MEDIUM EVER INVENTED AND DEGRADE IT FOR THEIR OWN BENEFIT!
DANGER OVERLOAD
FZIT!
POP!
SPAK!
STUDIO EMERGENCY PERSONNEL RESPOND QUICKLY...
AND WITH PREDICTABILITY...
NO! DON'T SHOOT! I WON'T HARM YOU!
BLAM! BLAM!
BLAM
OH NO! NOT WATER! I'LL--
KA-HULLT!
SHORT OUT!
THE END
GARBAGE--UTTER GARBAGE! BUT, IF WE'RE GOING TO PROSPER, WE'D BETTER DO THE AMERICANS ONE BETTER!
HOW ARE YOU GONNA DO THAT, BOSS? BUILD A FULL-SCALE BORGONZO LIKE IN THE MOVIE?
ACTUALLY, I HAD THIS RUBBER SUIT IN MIND!
...AND SO IT GOES...

OUTCAST
EVER SINCE I MOVED HERE, AFTER THE ACCIDENT, THINGS HAVE BEEN DIFFERENT.
PEOPLE STARE... AND WHISPER. LIKE I'M A FREAK.
LIKE I'M NOT A COMPLETE MAN.
SO I'M DIFFERENT! WHAT OF IT?
I CAN DO ANYTHING THEY CAN!
MAYBE, IN TIME, THEY'LL GET USED TO ME -- ACCEPT ME FOR WHAT I AM.
BUT RIGHT NOW...
STORY & ART by MARC HEMPEL
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...I JUST TRY TO FIT IN AS BEST I CAN.
END